Minimum Support Price of Coconut

1560. SHRI SOM PAL : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is true that Government have not so far announced the minimum support prices for cocunut ;

(b) if so, since when Government have been withholding the announcement and for what reasons ;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the Kerala Chief Minister, Shri K. Karunakaran has demanded immediate announcement of support prices and also that the prices recommended by the Commission on agricultural costs and prices would be unacceptable to Kerlala, as has been reported in the Indian Express of 7th Feb. 1994 and

if so, what is Government's reaction there to ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM) : (a) and (b) : Yes Sir, The report of the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) on the price policy for copra for 1994 was received towards the end of December, 1993. The Government has to seek views of the copra growing States and concerned Central Ministers on the CACP report before finalising its views. These views have since been received and announcement would be made as soon as possible.

(c) and (d) It is a fact that Chief Minister of Kerala made a strong plea for not fixing the minimum support price of copra lesser than Rs. 3500 per quintal and for an early announcement of the same. The Government is also aware of the report that appeared in a section of Press. The views of all the concerned State Governments including Kerala would be kept in mind while announcing the minimum support price for copra for 1994 season.

Safeguarding The Interests of Indian Farmers

1561. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Agriculture Ministry has expressed to the farmers that GATT will not restrict the freedom of Indian farmers and farm scientists in raising the country farm production and productivity or Agriculture protection provided to the farmers;

(b) if so, whether Government has decided to introduce specific legislation to safeguard interests of domestic farmers;

(c) what are the main objectives of the legislation ;

(d) whether India has clearly told that it would not allow patenting of seeds and would have its own "Suigeneris System" of preserving plant varieties; and

(e) if so, what are the other measures Government propose to initiate to clear the doubts of farmers in respect of GATT ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR) : (a) The provisions of the GATT Agreement on agriculture do not restrict Indian farmers and scientists from raising farm production and productivity nor does it require changes in the present level of agriculture protection.

(b) to (e) The GATT Agreement provides flexibility to member counties to opt for patenting or to formulate an appropriate national legislation for a protection of plant varieties. A Suigeneris System by way of specific legislation is under preparation. The legislation is intended to stimulate research and development and production of quality seeds while preserving the rights of the farmers and researchers.

Agreement of FA Inter-Country Programme

1562. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether India and FAO have signed an Agreement for FAO Inter-Country Programme for the development and application of integrated pest control in South and South-East Asia ;

(b) if so, what is the period of agreement;

(c) what are the main points of the Agreement;